The Mountain Indian of South America

His Habitat, History, Dress, Character and Religious Beliefs and the Missionary Situation Today

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AYMARA
JOSE DE SUCRE
CHUNO
ENVIRONMENT
FIESTAS
COMMUNAL ACTIVITIES
VIRACOCHA
INCA EMPIRE
SUPERSTITION
TEMPLE OF THE SUN

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1.
Introduction

1. Of all the Indian tribes of South America, the Highland Indian, or the Mountain Indian[1] as he is designated in this paper, is the most interesting and the most worthy of study, not only because in the past his civilization and culture reached a point at least as high as the Aztec and Mayan cultures of Central America, but also because at the present time he forms the largest and most concentrated bloc of unassimilated Indians in South America.

2. The study of the Mountain Indian can be approached from many viewpoints. To the anthropologist and the ethnologist, the fact that he has not deviated to any great extent from his former cultural pattern makes him an interesting source of investigation. The Inca Empire, the Spanish Conquest, and the Colonial Epoch are all fairly well documented for the historian. To the economist, the Indian is a special problem because he has refused to become assimilated to any considerable degree, and remains a drag on the body politic of the modern state. To the missioner and the educator, his preoccupation with past customs and superstitions, as well as the language barrier, make his complete conversion and education a formidable and long term task.

Habitat

3. When we speak of the Highlands of South America, we mean those extensive plateaus and fertile intermont basins hemmed in by the Andean ranges which run down the west coast of South America from Colombia, through Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia, and terminate at the Chile-Argentine border. In Colombia these ranges, three of them, run north to south parallel to each other, but in Ecuador consist of only

1. The author is neither an anthropologist nor ethnologist, and despite many years of close association with the peoples described, has found it necessary to make extensive use of Steward's *Handbook of South American Indians* in the preparation of this article.

two parallel ranges. In Peru the ranges are shorter and run diagonally, but Bolivia has three, two of which run north to south and a third which runs eastward. Farther south there is but one range separating Chile from Argentina. These Andean Mountains extend down the coast for some 3,600 miles, and vary in width from one hundred to four hundred miles, containing over fifty peaks more than 17,000 feet high, and countless small valleys.

4. At first glance one would expect the highland regions of the Andes to have a certain similarity of climate and scenery, but in reality they can be divided into three distinct sections: The Northern Andes (comprising Colombia, Ecuador, and Northern Peru) where a year round rainfall sustains a wet rain forest and grassland; the Central Andes (Peru, Bolivia, Northwest Argentina and Chile) where a contrasting rainy and dry season permit the growth of small bushes and ichu grass, and the Southern Andes (Southern Bolivia, and parts of North Chile) where there is no rainfall and where desert conditions exist.

Inhabitants

5. These three regions, because they are so distinct, gave rise to three separate cultures among the Highland Indian: that of the Chibcha to the north, the Inca in the Central Andes, and the Araucanian in the south. Of these three that of the Inca is the best known, and was the most advanced.

6. The Chibcha were conquered and almost completely assimilated by the Spanish, being represented today by a few small tribes in Colombia. The Araucanian pattern still survives in Chile, but their paucity of number and the diversity of the tribes makes it impractical to take them up in this study. We are primarily concerned with the contemporary tribes of the Inca culture living in the Central Andes. These are the Quechua Indians of Highland Ecuador, Peru and the Eastern Cordillera of Bolivia; and the Aymara Indians living in the altiplano of Southern Peru and Bolivia. Of these two, the Quechua is the more numerous; in reality, the two tribes are distinguished more by language differences than by any disparity in customs and living conditions. In this paper an attempt will be made to give a composite picture of the two tribes and what is said of one can be predicated of the other, unless otherwise indicated.

Population

7. It is difficult to ascertain with any surety the exact number of Quechua and Aymara Indians not only because the census takers have rather arbitrarily decided who is Indian and who is not, especially in the towns where many Indians have adopted the dress and some of the customs of the whites[2], but also because of the criterions used by the different approximators. An economist calls all dark skinned non-producers an Indian. The anthropologist arrives at a lower number because he counts as Indian only those who most closely approximate a primitive pattern. But of the 28,000,000 inhabitants of the highland regions, it is certainly safe to say that the number of Andean Highland Indians is 6,500,000. Of these the Quechua number 5,500,000, the Aymara 600,000, the Araucanians 300,000, and other miscellaneous tribes about 100,000.

History

8. No accurate figures are in existence on the number of Indians at the time the Inca culture flourished in the highland regions. Nor can we speak with any certainty and detail about the pre-Inca cultures. We do know that there were two very high civilizations existing along the Peruvian coast from about the time of Christ up till 600 A.D., and that at the same time the Mountain Indians of Peru and Bolivia had their own civilization designated as Tiahuanaco I.

9. These cultures merged to form another civilization called Tiahuanaco II, which takes its name from the region around Lake Titicaca in the highlands of Bolivia, and which spread along the coast, and throughout the highlands from Ecuador in the North to Chile and Argentina in the South. This lasted three hundred years up to 900 A.D., when for some reason unknown to us, it fell into decline.

10. The Incas began a new civilization during the 12th century and, starting in Cusco in highland Peru, conquered and imposed their culture on all the various tribes from Ecuador to Argentina. The dis-

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2. When they have intermarried, the term *Mestizo* is applied to these Indians. Usually they are tri-lingual or bi-lingual, speaking Spanish as well as Quechua and/or Aymara.

tances involved and the diversity of the tribes in this huge empire made it difficult to keep intact, and in 1526, just before the arrival of the Spaniards, civil war between two Inca brothers, Atahualpa and Huascar, divided the kingdom in two.

11. By the year 1541, two Spaniards with a handful of men had accomplished one of the greatest fetes in history. Sailing from Panama, Francisco Pizarro and Diego de Almagro fought hunger, mutiny and savage Indians all along the west coast, till finally, in 1532, they captured the reigning Inca, Atahualpa, who had shortly before disposed of his brother Huascar. In quick succession the two adventurers collected $3,000,000 in booty, garroted the Inca king, conquered the holy city of Cusco, and with it the whole Inca Empire.

12. As might be guessed, the Spaniards found that sudden wealth and power brought only dissension in the ranks. Nevertheless, the conquest advanced with Pizarro founding the city of Lima in 1535, and Almagro leading an expedition into Chile. On his return the two armies clashed in Cusco, the Pizarro forces being victorious; and Almagro was put to death. Three years later, Almagro's death was avenged when his son ran his sword through Pizarro on a quiet Sunday morning in Lima.

13. For the next twenty years colonists came from Spain in droves, lured by the fabulous accounts of wealth to be found in the New World. But since the yet unformed structure could not absorb them all, they took up with one faction or the other, continuing the civil war and unrest which had begun with Pizarro and Almagro. The Incas had previously tried two assaults on Lima and Cusco without success and now retired to their mountain fastness in the Urubamba Valley near Cusco, while some of the other more docile tribes admitted sovereignty of the King of Spain and yielded to the missioners. This unsettled state of affairs persisted till a new Viceroy, by name Francisco de Toledo y Figueroa, captured the reigning Inca, and by his public execution, reduced the imperial family to complete subjugation. Gradually, the Indian populations were settled in Spanish type towns where they could be controlled more easily.

14. Succeeding Viceroys till the year 1780 followed the same policy, having but two ideas in mind: firstly, to Christianize the Indian; secondly, to fit him into the economic setup. The first they tried to accomplish by systematically destroying his idols and temples where

the more pacific means of Christian indoctrination failed, and the second by forcing him to labor in the large and profitable silver mines.

15. In 1780 an Indian taking the name of Tupac Amaru II led an uprising of 60,000 Indians against the Spanish in Cusco, and a similar uprising took place in La Paz at the same time. The first was a bloody encounter which ended in the capture of Tupac Amaru and sixty-seven of his followers who were tortured and put to death.

16. Following these, there were many other smaller rebellions, and although these failed there were by now other forces in colonial South America plotting against the Spanish rule. Spaniards born in the colonies and called Creoles, though of the highest families, found that from the first they were being discriminated against in the matter of political offices, land grants, and in social life, even though those who had come from Spain were, in many instances, of much lower birth than they. These two factors then, Indian and Creole resentment, led to the revolution.

17. In an advancing movement on Peru, two liberators, Simon Bolivar coming down from Venezuela, through Colombia and Ecuador, and Jose de San Martin coming up through Argentina and Chile, finally secured independence from Spain and proclaimed the fact in Lima on July 28, 1821. This independence became a reality for Peru and Bolivia after General Jose de Sucre won a decisive battle at Ayacucho in 1824.

18. The status of the Indian, seldom a happy one before independence, was not much improved under the Republican form of Government. The Indian did increase in numbers partly because colonial mining enterprises came to a halt, but the same exploitative measures were in force. Tribute was still exacted from him, and the Government, according to some authorities, still relied on this source for at least one-sixth of its income. True, the mines no longer sucked in the whole of the highland population, but now the Indian was conscripted into armies in large numbers, and the growth of vast haciendas reduced his land holdings, forcing him into a form of serfdom in many communities.

19. This, then, is the historical background of the contemporary Quechua and Aymara Indian whose present existence we now take up in the second part.

2.

The Contemporary Indian of the Andean Highlands

Dress and Physical Appearance

20. The Mountain Indians before the conquest by the Spanish were an agricultural peoples little interested in hunting or fishing, sometimes caring for large herds of llamas and alpacas, and quite adept at metallurgy and ceramics. Those in the deep valleys where things grew more readily were principally small farmers, cultivating a variety of crops such as maize, squash, beans, sweet potatoes, and quinoa, a native grain. Those in the bleak altiplano grew what they could, but were more herdsmen than farmers, weaving strong and durable clothing out of the wool of their alpacas and llamas. They knew only a simple wooden stick for digging, and a hoe for farming, and their houses were simple mud affairs. They wore wrap-around garments of uncut cloth.

21. The Mountain Indian of today has changed but little. Some have gone to work in the tin mines and others have become tenants or peon workers on the big haciendas, but the majority are still farmers and herders. They still dress almost the same. A few in the big cities have taken to European garb, but the true Indian still wears shin-long grey woven trousers, and a gaily woven poncho over a store shirt and leather sandals. His poncho is of solid colors and usually some shade of red. Occasionally he wears a dirty felt hat on top of the knitted one.

22. His wife wears a blouse of heavy material, also of a red shade, anywhere from five to fifteen bulky skirts of brilliant and clashing colors—which she doffs one by one as the day grows warmer—and sandals like her husband's. She forms a bundle on her back by tying a blanket's ends across her chest, the resultant catch-all containing prac-

tically everything mentionable: vegetables, coca leaves, sticks for firewood, clothing, the doffed skirts, small ceramics for sale and usually a smiling, bright eyed baby, his head appearing sometimes right side up, sometimes right side down, his position apparently a matter of indifference to either himself or to his mother.

23. They are a dark skinned people, neither black nor yet bronze, but of an indeterminate brownish color, and small of stature, usually under five feet, but with an enormous chest development for their size. Taking oxygen from the rarefied air calls for large lungs, and an enlarged chest cavity. The Mountain Indian has an aquiline nose, large nostrils, big mouth with not very fleshy lips, and fine strong teeth. His beard, coming late in life, is negligible and covers but slightly the upper lip and the chin extremity. His square back and large chest cause his trunk to be out of proportion to his extremities and give him the appearance of great strength. As a matter of fact, they have little power for lifting heavy objects, but once the object has been lifted onto their backs, they will carry an unbelievable weight for long distances up and down mountains in a peculiar gait which resembles a dog trot.

Character Traits

24. The Quechua child is taught to respect and honor authority in whatever form it might take, whether it be parents, the ecclesiastical authorities, or the "gobernador." A fear of the outsider is ingrained in him as well as a fear of the evil spirits which lurk on all sides waiting for him to make a misstep. He is taught that he is inferior before the law and has no arms with which to defend himself. This philosophy of life produces in him a deep seated resignation to his lot, expressed in an inscrutable pokerfaced stolidity.

25. Occasionally, on fiestas, with the help of liquor he manages to cast off this outward inexpressiveness and becomes active and voluble. They rarely fight, and even when drunk seldom strike a blow. They never forget an offense but, on the other hand, do not seek revenge. On very rare occasions, stirred up by rabble rousers, he will remember all the injustices done him by the white man, and in an unthinking frenzy commit acts of violence, such as recently, when the workers of one mine attacked their white engineers and managers, killing one and wounding others. But these occasions are rare and seldom if ever

occur among the Indians who lead the communal life on their farms, and there is probably no other place in the world where there is less violence and fewer murders. On the whole, his character is one of basic docility, too docile in fact for his own good, for it leads him to be servile and to offer a blind submission to his leaders.

26. Throughout the years the Mountain Indian, living in a harsh environment, held down by the whites and the weight of his own customs and superstitions, has learned to be patient to an extraordinary degree. He will walk thirty miles to be married only to find the parish priest on a trip. Whereupon the whole bridal party will pass the coca around, and squat patiently in the courtyard for the necessary two or three day wait.

27. On one truck trip I saw two examples of the Indian's patience in circumstances which would drive a "gringo" to despair. We had traveled through the whole day and part of the night over punas as high as 15,000 feet and it was bitterly cold. At last, just as we could see the lights of the town below us in the valley, and started the winding descent, a rear tire blew out. I and any other "gringo" would have pushed the truck over the cliff at that point, but the driver nudged his helper awake, both had a good laugh, and whistling they began to repair the tire in that bone racking cold. The Indians piled up on the baggage behind, after having been exposed to so much discomfort and the biting winds of the whole trip (I had at least been protected and warm in the cabin), might have been in a Greyhound bus for all the emotion they showed. All during the hour and a half it took to patch the tire, I could hear their low voiced conversation and an occasional laugh.

28. It was still cold the next day as we started across another seemingly endless plain. The frost glistened on the ichu grass, and in the distance the wild vicunas huddled together for warmth. In the middle of that plain we came across a broken down truck. From inquiry we learned that it had been there for two days and would be there for two more while it waited for another truck to bring the necessary parts. The driver was quite cheerful about it all and the Indian passengers were nonchalantly boiling tea on the ground around the truck, apparently undaunted by the prospect of two more days in that forsaken spot and in that killing cold.

Housing

29. For all their skill in ceramic design and making silver articles, the Indian shows little imagination when it comes to making his own dwelling. He builds his house of adobe bricks, in a rectangular or square form, with a gabled roof of tiles or thatch. The floor is the good earth pressed down by countless bare feet. Cooking utensils are hung from the rafters or stored in niches in the wall. For the most part, the walls are left unfinished but in some instances are white-washed. The Mountain Indian, for whatever reason, avoids windows as he would an evil spirit, a fact which makes for dark, damp interiors. The kitchen is usually outside the house in a separate little building, or built in lean-to form against the house. An adobe wall customarily surrounds the property, forming a patio behind the house.

30. Furnishing is non-existent, even the bed being only two or three sheep or llama skins spread on the floor or on an adobe shelf built out from the wall. Eating utensils are often cut to the minimum. In some places I have been served with a soup spoon which also doubled as a knife, this effect being brought about by cutting off the upper third of the bowl of the metal spoon, and sharpening the resultant edge.

31. Nor is this lack of material comfort and inattention to interior decoration always the result of poverty. Even those who can afford much more are seldom moved to better their living conditions. I recall sitting on a wooden box in many a dark rectory where the pastor was of Indian stock, and to my certain knowledge could have afforded a chair.

Living Sites

32. One of the mysteries which always confronts a traveler in South America is why the Indians live where they do. Once I left a town with a truckload of Indians, and after traveling over an almost endless plain for hours, with nothing on either side but snow mountains off in the distance, one of the Indians tapped on the cab hood as a signal for the driver to stop. He then gravely descended to the ground, paid his fare, picked up his bundle and started off in the middle of nowhere. Where he was going, how many days it would take him, I have never been able to find out.

33. Generally, however, it can be said that the living sites of the Indians follow four basic patterns. Firstly, that in which each family occupies a house set up in the midst of his cultivated land. These houses may be closely grouped or at quite a distance from each other. Secondly, they may live in a small community and go out to their fields. Thirdly, one part may live where their fields are, and the rest of the inhabitants may have to go out to their fields. Fourthly, they live in towns which are almost without exception of Spanish origin.

34. Most of these pueblos or villages follow a definite plan. The town is built around a small plaza or square, the church and rectory on one side, the governmental buildings on the other, and around the other two sides a few residences, general stores and cantinas. The plaza is the center of activity both on fiesta and market days. It is around the plaza that the church processions parade and the Indian dancers make their way.

Food and Drink

35. The staple diet of the Mountain Indian is chuno, a dehydrated potato made by first cooking and then exposing them to the frost. The same process is used with other vegetables, and one authority estimates that fully fifty per cent of the food eaten is so prepared. This chuno forms the basis of an excellent soup which also contains mutton, corn on the cob, and various other ingredients. Sheep's head served with the eyes and teeth intact is considered a delicacy. Pigs and guinea pigs are bred for feasting at fiesta time.

36. The habit of coca chewing has long been a custom with the Indians, and a source of contention among those who have studied the habit. Some consider it a vice which keeps the Indian from rising above his environment and others look upon it as a blessing in disguise . . . the only thing which enables the Indian to live in an environment which is so physically taxing. The Indian mixes the dry, brittle leaves of the coca plant—which can be bought in any store—with a bit of lime prepared from the Kanawa stalk, or the bark of the Quenua tree, and chews the mixture. No Indian male is ever without his small pouch of leaves slung at his waist; no Indian woman without her little packet.

37. In many places it is customary to dole out the daily ration to the Indians one hires, since it alleviates fatigue and dulls the appetite while working and traveling. Those who consider this coca chewing

a vice say that it also dulls the intellect. However that may be, I can personally vouch for one thing. It has a very peculiar odor and a church full of coca chewing Indians takes a lot of getting used to.

38. Chicha is the native liquor and is made by the women from grain, being first chewed, deposited in a container, and then mixed with the dry flour. This dough is then stirred in warm water, boiled and left to settle. The result is allowed to ferment.

Occupations

39. As has been mentioned before, the Mountain Indian is preoccupied chiefly with agriculture, or herding where the altitude and temperature are not conducive to extensive farming. He still adheres to his old methods of cultivation, using a digging stick and very rarely a draft animal with a primitive plow. He has long known the value of irrigation, and has a marvelous system of terracing the steep mountain sides to make them suitable for cultivation.

40. Depending on the climate and the site, he produces potatoes, maize, barley, coca, quinoa, and wheat. He usually produces something for market even though his reward is hardly proportionate to the labor involved, for he can afford neither fertilizer for exhausted land, nor more modern tools.

41. A typical workday begins at sunrise when the men of the house go out to the fields. The first thing they do is sit down and have a chew of coca, then they work for an hour or so, and have another chew, then work till noon. Their lunch is brought out by the children from the house, consisting of chuno and perhaps a bit of cheese and more coca. Work till two. More coca. Work till five. More coca. Then home.

Community Work

42. For a long time I lived in a beautiful valley (it was called Valley of Paradise) with a large Indian community, and at nightfall when I was having my after dinner smoke, I would hear off in the distance a long drawn out hallo-o-o-oaaaa. As it died out, it would be taken up by someone closer, and then by another just below my house, and then again farther up the valley, till finally only the long drawn out echo bounced back from the surrounding mountains.

43. I soon discovered that this was the signal that on the morrow the males of the valley were to gather to clean out the water system and the communal irrigation ditches. Living a community life as they do, the Indians have to work in common, and it is surprising how much they accomplish by this system. Each man is obliged to furnish so many days each year working on the communal projects.

44. They also lend a helping hand to each other in the fields at sowing and plowing time and later are reimbursed in labor by the one they have helped. This is called working in "aine." Everyone belongs to a voluntary work party. In that same valley I have seen a group of men help their neighbor build his house over three week-ends. The first Sunday a large crowd collected, and to the music of their native instruments and frequent quaffings of chicha, they made adobe bricks. The second Sunday, the hot sun meanwhile having dried the bricks, they put up the walls, some relaying the bricks and others laying them. The third Sunday on went the tile roof.

Markets

45. I spent many an interesting hour wandering around the native market there also. Indians started coming into the town from all directions on market days, arriving in the plaza and setting up their booths as early as four or five o'clock in the morning. The variety of products sold or bartered was amazing. There were gaily colored ponchos, sandals made of old automobile tires (in fact, the maestro would cut them while you waited, using thin strips of inner tube for thongs), pottery of all shapes and sizes, odds and ends of hardware, cheap rings, old bottles, tin cans (these being invaluable for storing things and not readily accessible to the Indian, since he does not buy canned goods), bolts of cloth, ready made shirts, sacks of potatoes and grains, great chunks of raw meat, and fruits and vegetables of many kinds.

46. By nightfall they had all dispersed, already headed for the next town in the valley, if they were vendors of the more durable goods, or back to their homes if they had disposed of their vegetables. These portable markets move from one town to the other in the valley, each town having a specified day each week. In the larger towns where tourist trade is available, the prices are higher, and the workmanship finer, silver articles being most in demand.

Education

47. The Quechua secures most of his education from his parents, the boy from the father, and the girl from the mother. The boy learns to become a good farmer and his father teaches him all the secrets he knows. The girl learns to cook and to tend to the house, and both spend the early years of their lives herding the flocks.

48. Their formal education is almost nil. While the Sierra is the most densely populated part of both Peru and Bolivia, it has the smallest number of schools and many regions have none of any type. When a boy goes to the town to attend school, he frequently finds the language barrier too great a handicap (everything is taught in Spanish) and ends up being the butt of the class or performing menial tasks around the school.

Games and Diversions

49. Their recreations and games are few. Sometimes the boys bet small portions of their lunch, but gambling is not important for them outside of fiesta time, when traveling professionals introduce variations on the roulette wheel. Ordinarily they play with tops and baked clay marbles and guess how many corn kernels or stones the other has in a clenched fist. Like children the world over they play "house," the boy imitating the father and the girl the mother. They also use slingshots and shoot at targets, and "pitch pennies," using small pieces of shale in lieu of money.

50. The adults are not a playful people, being too occupied in gaining a living, and too serious by nature to let themselves go to any great extent even when relaxing. Occasionally, in some places, two of them will engage in a wrestling bout and attempt to throw each other out of a circle drawn in the dust. According to Tschopik, they also play a guessing game of riddles with some outlandish penalty for the loser.

Music and Dancing

51. They are very fond of music played on their native instruments, flutes, panpipes, and trumpets made of cow's horns. They have guitar or mandolin like instruments with sounding boxes made of amontadillo hide, and drums also, but by far the most popular are the panpipes made of cane tubes.

52. They use the pentatonic scale almost exclusively, repeating one simple melody over and over again with slight variations. Their music is sad and sorrowful and strange to the foreign ear, but once accustomed to it, the foreigner invariably finds that he likes it. It seems to embody all the "tristeza" that the Indian has stored up in his soul during his centuries of subjugation.

53. The Indians are as fond of dancing as they are of music, and they look forward to fiesta days, marriages, housewarmings, baptisms, and any other occasion which calls for tripping the light fantastic.

54. When they practise communal dancing, the Aymaras wear very elaborate costumes of velvet, adorned with silver threads, and masks of plaster fashioned to represent devils. Sometimes the dances go on for days on end, with the participants reeling around the plaza both from fatigue and chicha, till they fall to the ground and others take their places.

Community Political Life

55. As has been mentioned before, the Quechuas live a community life and have their own leaders in addition to those of the state, although of late these community officers have become more dependent on the state authorities represented by the governor, prefect and subprefect.

56. In the Quechua political hierarchy there are four classes of officers: the Alcalde, the Alguacil, the Segunda, and the Regidores. The Alcalde, or Mayor, is the most important and while he is subject to the governor, he does have considerable authority. It is his duty to see that the compulsory works on the roads, irrigation ditches and other public works are taken care of. He is also responsible for keeping the peace, judges some of the local disputes, and determines what is to be brought to the attention of the governor. The older people of the community elect him by talking over the candidates, choosing one and presenting his name to the governor, who always approves of their selection. Usually he has worked his way up through the minor offices and has had important positions in the great religious fiestas. His badge of office is the "vara," a staff highly ornamented with silver and covered with crucifixes and pictures of the saints.

57. The Alguacil is the Alcalde's executive officer and transmits his orders to the inhabitants and takes care of the actual detail of the Alcalde's office. The Segunda is an honorary office, being filled either by an ex-alcalde or by a promising candidate to follow the present incumbent. The Regidores, named by the Alcalde, are young men who act as guards and police, and form part of his entourage on fiesta days and trips.

58. In sections where the community has been broken down to the point where these officers do not exist, or do not have any real authority, the older men settle the disputes, and are consulted by the people in time of difficulty.

Marriage

59. For a young Indian to get married he must have certain qualities such as stability and eagerness to provide, and should own a piece of land or a herd if possible. The girl must be able to spin and weave, be strong enough to help in the fields, and remain faithful after marriage even though she has shown no particular talent in that direction up till the time of the marriage. The young people have almost complete freedom in choosing their partners. Like lovers everywhere the courtship varies from a few hours to some months, but unlike some more civilized peoples they are accustomed to premarital sexual freedom and in almost all instances there is a trial period during which the couples live together. This period of trial marriage lasts anywhere from one month to three years, while the couple live with the father of the husband. At the end of that time, in those regions where the Church is strong, the religious marriage may take place. When it does occur, it is accompanied by the interchange of many small gifts, feasting, dancing and drinking. Needless to say, the priests do not approve of this system of trial marriage.

Fiestas and Cofradias

60. Some mention must also be made of the fiestas among the Mountain Indians, for although such a discussion properly belongs in the next section, these fiestas partake of a social nature also. While the Indian has his own fiestas which do not have any religious connection, it is during the great religious fiestas that his love of ceremony is most clearly exhibited.

61. Each district has its patron saint, whether it be Santiago, San Juan, San Andres, or Our Lady under one of her numerous titles, and on this day there must be a Mass in the village church, a procession with the statue, and feasting afterwards. On this day also, the Indians take advantage of the presence of the priest (so many villages do not have a resident priest) to have their children baptized. The priest for his part takes this opportunity to teach the catechism for a few days before the feast, preaches a long sermon, and tries to induce the unmarried to marry, and the unconfessed to confess.

62. In addition, each village celebrates the major feast days, such as the Nativity, the Circumcision, Corpus Christi, and especially Holy Week and Easter. All Souls Day is celebrated everywhere.

63. Undoubtedly, the Mountain Indian is concerned with the spiritual significance of the feast he is celebrating, but he is also equally concerned with the individual office which is his on that day. Certain ones are appointed by the community or the "mayordomo," who is in charge of the feast, to supply the entertainment, to carry the statue in the procession, to pay the stipend for the Mass, and supply the chicha and coca. In general, everyone has a chance throughout the year of fulfilling one or the other of these duties, and usually they are assigned to different age groups. In many communities the expense for the individual is not inconsiderable.

64. In former times this custom had a more formal basis and went under the name of cofradias. A cofradia was a society or sodality consisting of about twenty-four males, who had charge of a particular altar in the church, and were responsible for its care, and the expenditures necessary when the feast of that saint was celebrated. There were as many cofradias as there were altars or saints, and every male in the community could belong to one or the other. These sodalities also had material benefits for their members, being obliged to provide for the funeral expenses, and occasionally for the families of the dead person if this were thought necessary.

65. It cannot be denied that many of these fiestas are accompanied by drunkenness and by sexual license, although the parish priests have always tried to check this, and in more civilized areas have been able to diminish and control it considerably, even though it has meant threatening suspension of the fiesta altogether.

3.

Religion

66. The religion of the contemporary Indian is such a hodgepodge of ancient beliefs and practices overlayed with a veneer of Christian teaching and doctrine, that it is necessary to go back to the religion of the Incas to understand it.

67. They (the Incas) believed in a Creator who created all men and ruled them from afar, and they represented him as a man, but gave him no definite name, calling him only by a series of titles such as "ancient foundation, and instructor of the world." Those earlier chroniclers who first took note of the Incas called this creator Viracocha, meaning lord.

68. They further believed that Viracocha left the administration of the world to other supernatural beings such as the sun, the moon, the stars, the earth, and the sea. Because they were an agricultural people, the sun naturally took first place in their cult of worship. In Cusco where they had their temples, there were many images of the sun, and while other gods were represented, in particular Viracocha himself, nevertheless, these temples were called temples of the sun. Second in importance was thunder, God of Weather, holding a war club in one hand and a sling in the other, and dressed in brilliant garments. The lightning was the flash of his garments as he strode through the heavens, the lightning bolt was the boulder from his sling, and the thunder was the crack of the sling itself. The rain was kept in a jug belonging to his sister and when he broke the jug with his slingshot, the rain fell on the earth.

69. The moon was the wife of the sun, and a moon eclipse was caused by a mountain lion trying to devour her. During the eclipse the Indians created a great noise in an attempt to scare off the attacker. Important to them also were the earth and the sea, called Paca-mama (earth mother) and Mama-cocа (mother sea).

70. But most interesting to the student of the Indian's religion are the "huacas" or shrines, which were either places or objects worshipped as supernatural beings. There were thousands of these huacas, and no man could know them all, for they might be buildings, graves, springs, stones, quarries, battlefields, trees, or any other object with which they came in contact. High snow mountains were famous huacas as they are today.

71. The Indians made a huaca out of a pile of stones at a bad part in the road, or at the top of a pass, and stopped to offer something, (worn out sandals, some coca, or another stone to the pile) and to pray for strength. This custom is still practised today, and the author only recently in a two day trip saw hundreds of these little rock piles all along the side of the road.

72. The greatest huacas of all, of course, were the temples built to house the images, the priests, and the vestments. The most important of these was the Temple of the Sun in Cusco, where the high priests and the consecrated virgins were quartered. The minor huacas usually had an attendant, an old man, who tended the shrine and acted as sorcerer, diviner and confessor when the occasion demanded.

73. As has been said, the Inca religion was a ceremonial one, and the Indian had many standard gestures. When he worshipped an object he stood facing it, "bowed low from the hips with his arms stretched out in front of him, parallel to each other and a little above the level of his head, the hands open and the palms out. Then he made a kissing noise with his lips, brought his hands to his lips and kissed the fingertips." (Rowe, H.S.A.I.) They stopped to take a drink from a river before crossing and prayed for safety. Sometimes they fasted from salt and chili and at other times from the heavier foods and sex relations.

74. They believed in a life after death but the rewards or punishments were not spiritual ones. The good went to live with the sun in the upper regions and had all good things to eat and drink; the bad lived after death in the bowels of the earth and had only rocks for food. They prayed too, aloud or silent, as the mood struck them, making up their own prayers and addressing the first part to Viracocha, the Creator, and the second part to the object itself; to the water that it might come into their fields, or to the rays of the sun that they might bring their warmth.

75. They believed also in the sinfulness of certain acts, but not in the sinfulness of thoughts. If a man committed a murder, or stole, or neglected the feasts or was careless in worship, cursed or disobeyed the Inca chief, he was in terrible danger of bad luck in this life and punishment in the next unless he confessed his sin.

76. The confessors were priests of both sexes (usually huaca attendants) to whom the sinner was supposed to tell his sin. The confessor counted a pile of small stones, or divined by some other method whether or not the sinner had told the truth. If he had not, in the confessor's opinion, he was struck with a rock on the back and made to confess again. If he had told the truth, he received a penance to fast or to pray.

77. They made sacrifices of animals and on special occasions of human beings, the victims being strangled with a cord, their throats cut, and their hearts offered to the deity while still beating. Sometimes an Indian would offer his own son to save his own life, if he were sick or injured. They offered chicha and minor food to the huacas, pouring the chicha on the ground, and burning the coca.

78. The public ceremonials of the Incas were elaborate festivals, replete with sacrifice, dancing and feasting, all prescribed in detail by ancient practice and custom, and usually associated with the agricultural year. There were sowing and harvest festivals, and celebrations for the first rains, and in honor of the sun. Drought and disease called for sacrifice, ceremonies and divination.

79. As can be seen from the foregoing, the Incas were idolaters from the Christian point of view, and it was this factor which gave the early missioners so much trouble when it came to converting them to the Catholic faith.

Religious Beliefs and Practices of the Contemporary Indian

80. It is hardly within the scope of this article to treat in detail with the various aspects of the Indian's conversion to Catholicism. Suffice it to say that the early missioners spared neither themselves nor the Indian in their efforts to bring him the true faith. What success they had (and history indicates that it was substantial) was later to be

destroyed in great measure by the abandonment of the encomienda system in the early 18th century, and later by the civil wars of the Independence era, which were followed by two generations of chaos, material and moral, in many of the South American countries.

81. Whatever the causes (and it is the present day fact rather than its historical cause which now concerns us) it would be rash to say that the present day Quechua and Aymara practises a pure form of Catholicism. True, the Church has penetrated into the most remote hamlets of these peoples, and practically all of them are baptized in the Church. But the scarcity of priests has made it impossible to instruct them in the fundamentals of the Faith, or even to care for them in a sacramental way.

82. The old Inca religion no longer exists with its priests and temples, but many of the beliefs and practices of those days remain with the Indian as a "personal" religion to be practised not in public but in the privacy of the small community or of the family. He still believes in witchcraft, amulets, huaca building, curing, and the heavenly hierarchy is a confused thing in his mind. Underlying the great Christian fiestas one may still find the pagan influence. On the night of St. Juan there is still practised the secular rite of blessing the sheep with chicha and coca. On the Feast of St. James is held the Fiesta of the Llamas, when the animals are given a little chicha to drink so that they may have strength. On St. Mark's day the fertility of the cattle is celebrated by pouring over the cattle a little chicha and making a coca offering to the spirits of the mountains. . . . (H.S.A.I. Mishkin. p. 469).

83. The Aymara even yet builds his little cairns of stones on the high mountains or where roads cross on the plains, leaving there a small offering for the protection of himself and his animals. He eats a little bit of earth at the spot where he has had bad luck or an accident, so as not to have a repetition. Paca-mama, the old earth mother, is now identified with the Blessed Mother, but the Virgin is not often called Mary or Mother of God. More often she is "la mamita," indicating that she is even yet associated in the Indian mind with Paca-mama.

84. The Aymara practises divination and white and black magic. Yatiri (special diviners) ascertain the future through the medium of

reading coca. They try to divine the outcome of a marriage, or of a business deal or whether the sick person will live or die. (Tschopik H.S.A.I. p. 563)

85. They have a body of superstitions which they still take seriously. You mustn't sleep in unhabitated places or the ghostmen will get you. They look like little old men always smiling, and their kindly aspect will lure you to destruction. They live in abandoned caves, houses set far off on the plains, and in rivers. When there are great whistling winds and terrible thunder storms you know that the ghostmen are near.

86. Then there are the Kharisiri who go around in the night looking for human fat and sucking blood, and the Mekhala who has the frightening aspect of a skinny woman with greasy, disheveled hair, mean, deep-set eyes which throw off sparks, a sagging stomach and a tail of fire. The only way to avoid her is by devotion to the Paccamama.

87. The rainbow appears in the sky for one reason only, and that is to announce bad luck. If you point to it, your finger will drop off. If your children look at it, they will die.

88. It is not necessary to go into the ramifications of the "personal" religious beliefs and practices of the Mountain Indians. The above should suffice to show that although they are nominally Catholic and practically all baptized in the Church, they cannot be said to be practising Catholics as we know the word.

Not Enough Priests

89. But if the Quechua and Aymara are not practising Catholics, the reason is simple. There are not enough priests to instruct them. As I write this, I am living with three other Maryknoll priests in the town of Cochabamba deep in the Quechua country. Last night we had a meeting. How can we arrange our already over full schedule to include the Indians in Sarco, a nearby pueblo? We haven't the time to go out there and teach catechism, nor make real personal contact with the people, but tomorrow I shall ask permission of the Bishop to trinate on Sundays. That way we can give them the Mass and some

doctrinal instruction in the sermon. But what about Tiquipaya and Paso? What about Sacaba and Taquina and Jaihuaico? Who is going to give them even Mass on Sundays?

90. Where are they going to get a priest? That is the burning question in the Indian countries today. It is the only problem delaying the complete conversion of the Indian. Protestantism is a negligible factor. Present day Indian superstitions are not a real deterrent. The governments are not only willing, but anxious to see the Indian converted and instructed in the Catholic faith. But from where shall the priests come?

91. Fr. Considine in his book *Call for Forty Thousand* estimates that South America needs almost forty thousand priests right now just to care adequately for the Catholic population. Bolivia, home of the Aymara, has 400 priests who can care for 800,000 at the most. That leaves almost 2,800,000 without a priest.

92. Peru, land of the Quechua, has 1,500 priests who can care adequately for 3,000,000 Catholics. What about the other 4,300,000, most of them Quechua?

93. The Diocese of Puno, comprised almost entirely of Quechua Indians, has twenty-eight secular priests, about twenty of them active. It now has three seminarians in first Philosophy, none in Theology. Few dioceses are proportionately better off; many are worse off.

94. Of this region Fr. Considine has said, "The depressing thought kept recurring, that we are not in a pioneer country but in a land of spiritual retrogression. We had here great religious houses centuries ago. One has at times the vague feeling of treading soil similar to regions in North Africa or Asia Minor where the Church was once vital but where enemies have brought it to decay."

95. As far as South America goes, the present enemy is lack of vocations, and in speaking of the Sierra regions we are tempted to say that there is no hope of any great influx of vocations in the near future. This lack of vocations has many causes. Most important perhaps is the fact that many South American countries lack a middle class, from which, most authorities agree, the greatest number of vocations can be expected. The priests of many of these countries do not come into contact with the young as much as might be expected, and their influence

is not so great. Add to these facts the poor (religiously speaking) family background of the Latin male, and his indifference to things ecclesiastical; the anti-clerical attitude of some of the high government officials, the low social status and poor living conditions of the priests, and we have some reasons for the lack of vocations.

96. What is the answer to the problem? Prayer certainly is the main answer to the difficulty. More foreign priests (there are now 580 in South America) with their higher standard of living, and modern methods of getting vocations is another partial solution.

97. But when everything has been said the undeniable fact still remains that South America must look for the answer within herself. Foreign missioners are but a finger in the dike, although their presence may with time act as a catalytic agent.

98. Before killing the Inca king, Pizarro held him for ransom. He collected $3,000,000. But there is a legend that many more millions were on their way over distant mountain trails, and were hidden when the news of Atahualpa's death reached the messengers. Many adventurers have since searched for this treasure.

99. The treasure is still there, but it is not gold, nor precious stones; it is 6,500,000 Indians still waiting patiently to be discovered.

Study Outline

GERALD C. TREACY, S.J.

The Mountain Indian represents a bloc, the largest and most concentrated, of unassimilated South American Indians. His civilization and culture in the past were as high as the Aztec and Mayan cultures of Central America. To the missioner his preoccupation with past customs and superstitions, as well as the language barrier, make his conversion a formidable and long term task.

There are three separate cultures among the Mountain Indians. The Inca is the most advanced. Living in the Central Andes, the Inca is represented by two tribes, the Aymara and Quechua Indians. They number six million five hundred thousand. During the twelfth century the Incas began a new civilization influencing all the tribes from Ecuador to Argentina. This huge empire was split by civil war just before the arrival of the Spaniards. In 1541 the Spaniards had conquered the whole Inca empire.

For the next twenty years colonists came from Spain in droves, lured by the fabulous tales of wealth to be found in the New World. The first idea of the Spaniard was to Christianize the Indian. His second idea was to get from the Indian as much work as possible. Up to the nineteenth century this was Spanish policy, carried out under Viceroy after Viceroy. In that century Indian resentment and Creole resentment led to revolution. Republics arose throughout South America. Under these, however, the Indian was not much improved.

The Mountain Indian of today has changed but little. Throughout the years, living in a harsh environment, held down by the whites and his own superstitions he has developed a docility that leads him to be servile and blindly submissive to his leaders. His patience is extraordinary.

The habit of coca chewing has long been a custom among the Indians. Those who have studied the habit disagree about its worth. Some hold it is a vice doing great harm to the Indian. Others consider it a blessing in disguise.

The religion of the modern Indian is a hodgepodge of ancient beliefs overlayed with a veneer of Christian teachings. His conversion however to Catholicism is not a difficult task. The only thing delaying it is lack of priests. Six million five hundred thousand Indians are waiting to hear the name of Christ.

Questions

Why is the Mountain Indian most worthy of study?
How does the anthropologist look on the Mountain Indian?
Why does the economist find the Mountain Indian a special problem?
What problem does he present to the missioner?
What is meant by the Highlands of South America?
Have the highland regions a similarity of climate and scenery?
Why are there three separate cultures among the Highland Indians?
What are the two tribes of the Inca culture?
In what do these tribes differ?
How extensive was the Inca empire when the Spaniards arrived?
By the year 1541 the Spaniards had made history. Explain.
What did sudden wealth and power bring to the Spaniards?
What two ideas did the Spaniards have in treating the Indians?
What means did they take to carry out these ideas?
In the nineteenth century what forces besides Indian resentment were plotting against Spain?
When Republican rule was established how was the Indian affected?
What are the main things taught the Indian child?
The character of the Mountain Indian is docile. Explain.
What of the Mountain Indian's patience?
What of the Mountain Indian's dwellings?
The living sites of the Indians follow four basic patterns. Explain.
What is the general plan of most villages?
Does the habit of coca chewing benefit the Indian?
What are the occupations of the Mountain Indian?
How long is the working day of the Mountain Indian?
What is the individual Indian obliged to do on communal work?
Everyone belongs to a voluntary work party. Explain.
Where does the Indian get most of his education?
What is the Indian's attitude toward games, music and dancing?

Is Indian music gay or sad?

What are the four classes of Indian officers?

State the marriage customs of the Mountain Indian.

Describe the Mountain Indian's fiestas.

To understand the religion of the Indian today we must go back to the Incas' religion. Why?

What are the huacas in the modern Indian's religion?

What did the first missioners find as the chief obstacle in the conversion of the Indian?

How can we explain the harsh treatment given the Indian in the earlier years of their conversion?

What factors hindered conversion in the early days of the Conquest?

The study outline and questions for "The Mountain Indian of South America," were formulated by Gerald C. Treacy, S.J., who has prepared study club editions of various encyclicals.

A Note on the Author

Father Francis X. Lyons, M.M., was born in Philadelphia, Pa., on December 31, 1916 and attended West Catholic High School and St. Joseph's College in that city. In 1935 he entered Maryknoll and began the study of theology at the Major Seminary, Ossining, N. Y. After ordination in February, 1943, he was assigned to the South American missions to begin his apostolic labors among the Quechua Indians in Puno, Peru, remaining there until 1945. He then went on loan to the Peruvian Government as Director of Rural Normal School, near Huancayo, Peru.

The years 1947 and 1948 found Father Lyons in Ecuador working among the coastal peoples. For the last year he has been working in Bolivia with the Quechua peoples, and has recently been named Superior of the Bolivian Group. Some of the author's writings have been published in the *Catholic World,* the *Field Afar,* and the *Shield.*

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